

*Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today opened The Solar Energy Consortium's (TSEC's) third annual Solar CEO Conference, remarking on the need for continued enhancement of the United States' position in the emerging solar energy industry. Since helping to establish The Solar Energy Consortium in 2007, Hinchey has secured \$31 million for TSEC and its partner companies, creating hundreds of new jobs in the Hudson Valley.*

"It is always such a pleasure for me to come back to the campus of SUNY New Paltz. As an alumnus of this fine college, I know firsthand what a great job they are doing preparing students for their futures. I also know that SUNY New Paltz is committed to being an involved and active community partner and so I would like to thank Interim President Donald Christian for recognizing the importance of the solar industry in our community and for hosting this important conference.

In 2007, when The Solar Energy Consortium was just an idea, I could never have imagined what we would have accomplished in just a few short years. With more than 70 partner companies, TSEC is now one of the largest consortia in the country and the Hudson Valley is quickly becoming a pioneer region in the development of new solar technologies and solar technology applications.

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives I have worked to do my part in securing more than \$31 million in federal funds for TSEC and its partners in New York. This significant investment, along with TSEC's outstanding team of professionals, has helped establish the Hudson Valley as a national solar hub.

The small and large companies that make up the Consortium include more than 15 that now call the Hudson Valley home. They range from solar manufacturers, to installers, to tooling companies and together they created hundreds of new jobs in the Hudson Valley, thanks to the efforts of TSEC.

In the last Congress, the Recovery Act and other legislation that passed with my support poured billions into renewable energy projects, grants, loan guarantees and tax credits that have helped the solar industry grow by over 100 percent in 2010, create enough new solar capacity to power 200,000 homes and provide work to more than 93,000 Americans.

In New York State and across the country, the solar industry has made remarkable progress by taking challenges head on and turning them into opportunities. The result has come in the form of innovation and jobs but significant challenges remain in overcoming technology and market hurdles.

No one organization is more familiar with or impacted by the challenges and opportunities in the field of energy than the Department of Defense.

According to retired Army Brigadier General Steven Anderson, in the last nine years, 1,000 Americans have been killed on fuel-related missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each year, \$24 billion is spent on fueling the military's mission. I believe that there is an important role for solar energy in solving this problem and many of you are already developing technologies that will do just that.

In addition to serious and costly operational energy concerns, military installations remain highly vulnerable to our aging national electrical grid. In the event of grid failure, it is unclear if many military facilities will be able to operate effectively without access to independent sources of electricity.

As the largest energy consumer in the world, the military is embracing a new culture to address the department's use of energy. New efforts and significant funds are being expended to reduce the department's dependence on fossil fuels, increase the supply of renewable energy and develop the next generation of renewable energy technology. These efforts will enhance our national security and make our country and military personnel safer.

As the Department of Defense purchases solar panels to address very serious energy security concerns at defense installations around the country, we must ensure that those purchases support American jobs, including those here in New York, rather than competitors that build panels abroad.

That's why I authored a legislative provision that requires solar energy panels purchased by the Department of Defense through subcontracts to be made in the United States.

This month, in a strong showing of support for American workers who build solar panels, President Obama signed the legislation containing my provision into law.

Establishing real energy security at our defense installations in the U.S. and abroad is critical to our national security, which is why I invited our two keynote speakers here today -- both of whom bring a wealth of experience and information regarding defense energy security that I know you will find extremely valuable.

Dr. Kevin Geiss is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy. Paul Bolinger served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army and is now General Manager of Government Solutions for Boeing Energy.

Both are at the forefront of our country's efforts to develop and use new forms of energy and I'm proud to call them my friends. Kevin and Paul, thank you for being here today.

I am deeply grateful for the continued ability to work with people like Kevin and Paul, TSEC, and all of you. This annual conference is a key step in continuing to promote our region's foothold in solar energy and substantially contributes to the national dialogue regarding our security, our economy and our energy future.

And so today, we will begin a conversation about the next steps we can take to drive our domestic solar energy industry forward. The esteemed group of individuals gathered here today have the ideas, energy and determination we need to go head-to-head with countries around the globe, including Germany, Spain and especially China.

It is my hope that the discussions, the speeches and most importantly the connections that are made here today will reveal the opportunities we have to meet our unique and shared challenges.

I'd like to thank all of our panelists and guests for joining us today. Welcome to the Third Annual

TSEC Solar CEO Conference."